

## My Prayer Journal

*Use this weekly prayer to help you begin your time with God each day.*

### Prayer of Confession:

*Holy God, help us to model our lives on love, faithfulness, patience, and endurance, and not on disloyalty, recklessness, pride, and corruption. Help us to model our lives on Jesus, Paul, and Timothy. Help us to always turn to Your Holy Word as the foundation for our lives and hold us firm in what we have been taught. Allow us to allow Scripture to form us, rebuke us, correct us, and train us. We pray in the holy name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.*

### My Prayers this Week:

### Family Time:

Do you have math books, science books, and social studies books that teach you about those subjects? What about music books? Have you used a book to help you learn to play piano? Have you ever looked at a rule book for soccer or basketball so you know the rules? The Bible is like a guidebook for learning to live as a Christian. It tells us the story of God's relationship with people, and shows us what we need to do to learn more and more about following Jesus. That helps us to know how to make the world a better place—the kind of place God wants! What does God want YOU to learn from the Bible?

## MONDAY 7.27.20

## John 5:39-40

The entire thrust of our new sermon series is trying to discern how we as Christians should behave in our disagreements—not only, but perhaps especially, when we disagree with other Christians. We begin by asking a simple question—why do you believe what you believe? Well, for Christians, the Bible is the foundation of our faith, which points us to Jesus. In today's passage, Jesus is speaking to the Jewish leadership who believe Jesus has blasphemed by healing on the Sabbath. These leaders were the safeguards of the Jewish Scriptures (our Old Testament), constantly studying the Law and trying to ensure it was upheld by the people. Jesus acknowledges that they believe that eternal life, a right relationship with God, is found through obedience to this Law. Yet the same Scriptures they believe they are upholding in condemning Jesus actually point TO Jesus! Jesus proceeds to teach them, and us, that when we turn to Scripture, whether the Old or New Testament, we find Him, and in Him, real eternal life.

- Do you think you disagree with others in a way that is honoring to God?
- What is your view of Scripture? Is your life based on it?
- How are you allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you?

## TUESDAY 7.28.20

## Mark 12:18-27

In the Judaism of Jesus' day, there was a major theological disagreement between the Pharisees and the Sadducees concerning the subject of resurrection. The Sadducees accepted only the Torah (the first five books of our Old Testament) as authoritative for the setting of religious doctrine, and they say nothing on the subject. Because of this silence of Torah, they did not accept the doctrine. The Pharisees, though accepted our entire Old Testament as authoritative, including the Psalms and the Prophets, which do speak of the promise of resurrection, notably in Ezekiel and Daniel. For this reason, they affirmed the doctrine. In today's reading, the Sadducees confront Jesus with what they perceive as a logical fallacy with the doctrine, which Jesus, like the Pharisees, affirms. In confronting this disagreement, Jesus makes His case by quoting from Exodus—a book His opponents *would* have called authoritative. Jesus does not back down from His position, but He also speaks from the common ground He shares with His opponents.

- What is your primary authority?
- When culture and Scripture clash, which do you gravitate toward?

## WEDNESDAY 7.29.20

## Exodus 3:1-17

Today we reach far back into the Old Testament, to the story of Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush. As we continue to explore the question of why we believe what we believe, this story helps us to grasp a somewhat difficult truth. All we can know about God is what God chooses to reveal to us. When we turn to the Bible as our ultimate authority, we are expressing our belief that within its pages, God has revealed Himself to us through its stories and poems and sermons. Ultimately, God chose to reveal Himself as fully as we are capable of understanding in Jesus Christ. In His meeting with Moses, God reveals Himself as the same God his ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob encountered and worshipped, as the champion of the miserable, and even as "I AM WHO I AM." God's name conveys the constancy of God—God can be counted on to be the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. This consistency provides a firm foundation for belief. We do not need to worry that God's expectations will change with the seasons. If we base our beliefs on God's revelation of God's self, they rest on a firm foundation.

- How is God revealing Himself to you?
- Do you believe God reveals Himself through the Bible?

## THURSDAY 7.30.20

## Job 42:1-6

Job lost everything. The beginning of the story tells us that God allowed Job to suffer in this way as proof to Satan that Job's faith in God was not selfish—that Job was not faithful merely because he anticipated God's reward. Job never lost faith in God, but because Job believed so firmly in God, he demanded an audience with God, so God could explain Himself to Job. Throughout the story, Job's friends extend all kinds of rationale for Job's experience, but Job will have none of it. He demands an explanation from God Himself. When God finally reveals Himself to Job, Job does not get the explanation he wants. But in today's reading, at the end of the story, Job has been changed by his encounter with God. While he doesn't get a reason for his suffering, he learned, at least, that a reason existed. He came to trust in God's sovereign ordering of the world, even when he didn't have the answers he wanted. He realized that even if he lost everything, he had not lost God.

- Where do you think Job's beliefs about God came from? How did they change after an encounter with God?
- Where do your beliefs about God come from? How have your beliefs changed during your faith journey?

**FRIDAY 7.31.20**

**Habakkuk 3:1-19**

As we saw yesterday with Job, sometimes, our belief system can be challenged by difficult times. The prophet Habakkuk lived in ancient Judah in a time when sin was rampant. The king was hostile to God’s prophets, and the nation was trapped between the aggressions of two superpowers, Assyria and Babylon.

“Habakkuk” means “wrestler,” and Habakkuk wrestles with philosophical questions that if we’re honest, we all wrestle with. If you have time, read chapters 1 and 2 also! Why does it seem that God ignores injustice? Why do wicked kings thrive? Why does it sometimes seem that we have to wait through evil’s dominance for God’s good to overcome evil? Habakkuk ends his argument with God with the prayer in today’s reading. He poetically recalls God’s deeds of the past, prays for God to act redemptively again, but ends with one of the most beautiful passages in Scripture—  
“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vine ... yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.”

- Do you find it hard to hold onto belief in God’s goodness and omnipotence when you see evil in the world?
- What do you think helped Habakkuk hold on to faith?

**SATURDAY 8.1.20**

**Acts 17:16-34**

Paul sets the context for today’s reading perfectly in verse 21—  
“All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.” Into this world of a multitude of ideas and belief systems came Paul, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. Notice the complete lack of Old Testament references as Paul witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus, appealing to them on their own terms instead. The Greeks would easily have agreed to Paul’s description of God’s activity in the world, approving how he even quoted one of their own poets. But when Paul criticized the making of gold and silver images, calling it ignorance, and when Paul called for repentance of sin, their attitude would have begun to change. By the time Paul mentions the Resurrection, many of them “sneered” - a Greek word implying heavy ridicule. While most of those who disagreed with Paul dismissed this strange idea, some were intrigued, and a few even became disciples. Paul did not allow the ridicule and disparagement from academia to deter him. He stated his case, followed up with those willing to hear more, and left those who disagreed to their own ideas.

- In a disagreement, do you enjoy arguing and persuading?
- How does Paul’s behavior in Athens model how to disagree?



Daily Study Guide

July 26-August 1, 2020

**Sermon Series: The Fine Art of Disagreement**

**Week One: “Why Do We Believe What We Believe?” - Rev. J. David Israel**

*Scripture for Sunday, July 26: 2 Timothy 3:10-17*

“But you have paid attention to my teaching, conduct, purpose, faithfulness, patience, love, and endurance. You have seen me experience physical abuse and ordeals in places such as Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. I put up with all sorts of abuse, and the Lord rescued me from it all! In fact, anyone who wants to live a holy life in Christ Jesus will be harassed. But evil people and swindlers will grow even worse, as they deceive others while being deceived themselves. But you must continue with the things you have learned and found convincing. You know who taught you. Since childhood you have known the holy scriptures that help you to be wise in a way that leads to salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for showing mistakes, for correcting, and for training character, so that the person who belongs to God can be equipped to do everything that is good.” (CEB)

*Things that really impacted me from today’s sermon:*

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**Prayer Requests**

- Stephen Rye
- Joan Burkholder
- Tiffany Davis
- Glenn Randolph
- George Crow
- Jerry Davis
- Nancy Davis
- Claudia McManomy
- Shirley Vaughn
- Ken Mann
- Carolyn Mann
- Doug Nash
- Charlotte Ottley
- Vicki Robinson
- Delaney Digman
- Bill Reichter
- Bob Vincent
- Peggy Cruse
- Bill Cruse
- Sophia Miller
- Judy Hoffman
- Nini Schneider

Everyone affected by the COVID-19 outbreak

Our communities suffering from the violence

Our community, country and world

All school officials, parents, and students as the next school year is being planned and difficult decisions are being made

The Cook family on the passing of Nellie Cook

The Bannes and Nishimura families on the passing of Dorothy Rose Bannes, grandmother of Lisa Nishimura

**Share prayer requests online at [livingwordumc.org](http://livingwordumc.org)**